

TEMPER and CONDUCT of the PRI-  
MITIVE MINISTERS of the GOSPEL  
*Illustrated and recommended:*

1418e.11

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IN A  
SERMON  
PREACH'D AT  
WISBEACH,

June 8. 1737.

the ORDINATION of the  
Rev. Mr. WILLIAM JOHNSTON.

P. DODDRIDGE, D.D.

*Published, with some Enlargements, at the Request  
of the Ministers that heard it.*

To which are added,  
JOHNSTON's Confession of his Faith,  
AND  
CHARGE given him at that Time by the  
Reverend Mr. STEWART.

L O N D O N,

for RICHARD HETT, at the Bible and Crown;  
JOHN OSWALD, at the Rose and Crown, both  
in Poultry. M.DCC.XXXVII.

( Price One Shilling. )

THE SECRETARY OF THE  
NAVY  
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM  
FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE  
NAVY



THE SECRETARY OF THE  
NAVY  
WASHINGTON

RECEIVED  
JUN 11 1864  
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AND  
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FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE  
NAVY  
WASHINGTON





2 COR. iv. 5.

*For we preach not ourselves, but Christ  
Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your  
Servants for Jesus sake.*



THE Apostle observes, that  
*what had happened to him*  
with regard to his Imprison-  
ment at *Rome*, tho' it seemed  
to bear so melancholy an  
Aspect, yet did on the whole  
fall out by the special Providence of God  
*for the Furtherance of the Gospel\**; and we  
may justly apply the same Reflection to sever-  
al other very afflictive Circumstances of his  
Life, and particularly to the most perverse and  
unjust Opposition which he met with from  
those factious Teachers, especially of the *Cir-*  
*cumcision*, who gave so much Disturbance to  
him and the Churches. The Attack which they  
made upon his Character and Interest at *Corinth*,

\* Phil. i. 12.

laid him under a Necessity of saying many things which he would have gladly omitted, and of mentioning some Circumstances in his History, which had otherwise perhaps remained unknown, at least could never have appeared with equal Evidence and Spirit. While he is engaged in his own Vindication, and entering into the Particulars of his Character and Conduct, he drops many very edifying Expressions, which are worthy the most attentive Regard both of Ministers and private Christians; of which the Words I have now been reading, are none of the least considerable. He was also obliged to say something which might look like an Encomium on himself, and therefore chuses to speak in the Name of all his faithful Brethren in the Ministry, as well as in his own. Now after he had declared that they had *renounced the hidden things of Dishonesty*, (which were the great Mysteries of the *Heathen Priesthood*, and probably the secret Spring which actuated these *Judaizing Teachers*,) *not like them, walking in Craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully*, or adulterating it with any foreign and corrupt Mixtures; but acting *constantly in the Sight of God*, as to secure to themselves a secret Testimony in the Consciences of all that intimately knew them, and accurately observed them; he adds, *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your Servants for Jesus sake.*

*Sake* \*. Oh that every Christian Minister who in succeeding Ages hath read these Words, had been delivered into the Mold of them ! Oh that we whom God hath honoured with this high and holy Calling, may make it our increasing Care to form ourselves by them ; and *beholding as in a Glass* the beautiful Model, *may be changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory.*

It will be my Business in the Process on my Discourse from these Words,

I. To illustrate the Account which the Apostle here gives of his own Conduct, and that of his Brethren in the Christian Ministry.

II. To consider the Principles on which we may reasonably conclude they acted, and by which they were influenced to it.

III. I SHALL close with some Reflections on the whole.

I CHUSE to throw my Discourse into such Form, as it will give me an Opportunity of suggesting my Advice and Exhortations to you, my dear and Reverend Brother, who are this Day giving yourself up to this ex-

\* It seems evident to me, that *Ver. 3* and *4.* come in as a parenthesis.

cellent Work, in the most humble and respectful Manner; which I am now the more solicitous to do, lest I should seem to dictate to those from whom I shall always be ready, with great Pleasure and Deference, to receive Instructions.

I. I AM to consider the Account which the Apostle gives of his own Conduct, and that of his Brethren in the Christian Ministry: *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your Servants for Jesus sake.* In which Words he plainly declares—that they did not make themselves the chief End of their Ministry, but faithfully devoted it to the Service of Christ as the great Lord, whom they endeavoured to serve by all the most humble and affectionate Condescensions to those that were committed to their Ministerial Care.

I. THE Apostles did not make themselves the chief End of their Ministry.

*We, says St. Paul, preach not ourselves.* It is to be feared that some did so even in these early Days, for the Antichristian Spirit began to work betimes; so that it gave Paul reason to say, that *they served not Christ Jesus but their own Belly*, while they preached him out of Contention, rather than Love, supposing to add Affliction to his Bonds\*; inso

\* Phil. i. 15, 16.



much that he complains of it as a general, though blessed be God, not a universal Character, *all seek their own things, not the things which are Jesus Christ's* \*. But this was far from being the Character of the Apostle, or any faithful Disciple of Christ; who must have learnt in some measure that essential Branch of the Christian Character, *to deny himself, and taking up even his Cross to follow his Master to Crucifixion itself*, should he lead him on in that painful and dangerous Way †.

It may be worth our while more particularly to observe, that these good Men did not seek their own *Applause*, their own *Interest*, or their own *Power* and *Authority*, as the chief End of undertaking and prosecuting the Ministry; for each of these particulars must be included in this general Expression, *we preach not ourselves*, and it will be our Wisdom to regard each.

THESE primitive Ministers did not, in preaching the Gospel, aim at their own *Applause* and *Reputation*.

THE greatest Men amongst the *Heathens* did it, and avowed it; they reckoned the Love of Fame amongst the noblest of Passions, and the Pursuit of it appeared a Mark of the most generous Mind. But Christian Apostles had higher Views. They

\* Phil. ii. 21.

† Mat. xvi. 24.

considered themselves as in the Presence of God, and had the truly great Ambition \* of being *accepted of him*, and then human Applause and Admiration disappeared as less than nothing. It is, says good St. Paul, *a very small thing to me*, the smallest Matter one can imagine, † *to be judged of Man's Judgment, for he that judgeth me is the Lord*. On this Principle we find, that when he came to *Corinth*, though it were so learned and polite a City, he did not affect to come with *the Excellency or Loftiness of Speech, and the persuasive Words of Man's Wisdom* ‡; he did not labour for the exactest Forms of Expression, nor study to compose and deliver his Discourses in such a Manner as might most easily have gained him the Reputation of an exact Orator, so that People should point after him as he passed through the Streets, and say, *That is Paul!* a little Circumstance with which poor *Demosthenes* was so highly delighted; but he contented himself with preaching the plain things of the Gospel, in a plain and serious, a rational and unaffected Manner, whether Men would hear, or whether they would forbear. And indeed he was rather on his guard against too pompous and florid a Style, lest it should seem that a Man who was so studious to adorn the Doctrines of the Gospel, did not

\* 2 Cor. v. 9. † *Ελαχίστον*, 1 Cor. iv. 3. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 1.  
*Ελαχίστον* thoroughly

thoroughly believe them; and so *the Cross of Christ should have become of none Effect\**, when an Apostle seemed so little penetrated with the Argument drawn from it, as to be at leisure for Trifles.

SUCH a Turn of Mind we may easily perceive in his Epistles. They appear to be written out of the Fulness of his Soul, but without any Anxiety about the Style, or any very exact Care even to range the Ideas according to the most methodical Order; abounding every where with a great many lively and beautiful Digressions, that often run into each other in a Manner which the strictest Rules of polite Writing will hardly allow. In a word, we eminently see in *St. Paul*, perhaps beyond any other Writer in the World, *a good Man bringing out of the good Treasure of his Heart good things†*, with a kind of magnificent negligence. His Works are like a Wilderness of beautiful and fragrant Plants, springing up promiscuously out of a happy Soil; and amidst all their seeming Confusion, producing, to a natural Taste, a finer Effect than if they were drawn out with a solicitous Care, set in the most regular Figures, and cut into a thousand artificial Forms.

AGAIN, the Apostles, and their Fellow-labourers in the Gospel-Ministry, were not governed by a View to the *Possessions* of the present Life.

\* 1 Cor. i. 17.

† Mat. xii. 35.

THESE holy Men abhorred the very Thought of making the Church of Christ a kind of Porch to the Temple of Mammon. The Circumstances in which they undertook their Work, were such as could leave no room to suspect that they sought it only as a gainful Trade. On the contrary, at their very first setting out in it, *they left All*, that they might follow their Master. And tho' it may be objected with regard to some of them, that their All was little, yet they had at least Food and Raiment, and a Habitation which they could call their own; whereas when they devoted themselves to the Ministry of the Gospel, one of them could say in the Name of the rest, *even to this Day we are hungry and naked, and have no certain Dwelling place* \*. And this was St. Paul, who seems to have resigned very great Prospects, which his liberal Education, his remarkable Proficiency and Zeal in the Jewish Religion, and the degree of Favour which he had even in his younger Days with the greatest Men of his Nation, might fairly have given him. But *those things which were before Gain* to him, he counted *Loss for Christ* †. And when he had once devoted himself to God's Service, his Actions as well as his Words plainly shewed, that he was *crucified to the World* by the Cross of his Redeemer.

\* 1 Cor. iv. 11.

† Phil. iii. 7.



could therefore appeal to the *Corinthians*\*, that his Conduct had proved he sought not *theirs*, but *them*; and when writing to the *Thessalonians*†, could make an Appeal to God himself, that he had never used a *Cloak of Covetousness*. Nay, when leaving the *Ephesians*, amongst whom he had made so long an Abode, that his real Temper must have been discovered, he could assure them, and they themselves could testify the Truth of it, that he had been so far from *coveting any Man's Silver, or Gold, or Apparel*, that his own Hand had ministered to his *Necessities*‡; and that in order to prevent his being burdensome to them, even for the *Necessaries of Life*, he had sometimes added the Labour of the Night to that of the Day.

NOR did these holy Men arrogate to themselves any *secular Power*, or pretend to any Authority over the Civil Liberties of Mankind.

GROTIUS supposes this to be the direct and principal Meaning of the Text; *We reach not ourselves as Lords*, but proclaim *Christ Jesus* alone under that Character. And this undoubtedly is included in the Phrase, though I can see no imaginable Reason for such a Limitation as he would lay upon it. These primitive Pastors of the Church, according to that excellent Advice of *St. Peter*

2 Cor. xii. 14.

† 1 Theff. ii. 5.

‡ Acts xx. 33, 34.

(so peculiarly forgotten by those who have contended for the Honour of being his only Successors) did *not* behave as *Lords over God's Heritage* \*; and though they insisted upon it, that what they wrote by a divine Revelation and Direction, should be received as *the Commandment of Christ* †, yet *Paul* himself expressly renounces all Claim to a Dominion over Mens Faith: Thereby confessing himself not to be the Master of the Family, but merely a Servant in it, who desired to be regarded by them, no farther than he could prove that he spake in a greater Name than his own. *Let a Man*, says he ‡ *so esteem of us as Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God*, of whom the great thing required is, *that we be found faithful* to him whose Commission we bear. Nor did they ever pretend that this extraordinary Character of Messengers from Heaven gave them any Claim to secular Power on Earth; they assumed no Authority in *Temporals in order to Spirituals*; and they were not penetrating enough to understand the Doctrine of the *two Swords* §, with which many have since been so fond of meddling.

\* Dr. Latham's elegant and judicious Discourse on the Clause of my Text, at the Ordination of Messieurs *Gregg* and *Dodge*, will abundantly supply the Deficiency of the brief Remarks of mine upon it; and thither I do with great Pleasure refer the Reader.

† 1 Pet. v. 3.

‡ 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

§ Luke xxii.

I fear to their own wounding, as well as to the Dishonour of the Christian Name, and the Destruction of many of their Fellow-Creatures. *The Weapons of the Apostle's Warfare were not carnal, but spiritual*, as it was necessary they should be in order to the bringing every Thought into subjection to the Law of Christ \*. Which leads me to pass on from this negative Part of their Character, to observe, that as they did not preach themselves so as to make their own Reputation, or Interest, or Dominion the End of their Labours; so,

2. THEY faithfully devoted their Ministry to the Service of Christ.

*We preach Christ Jesus the Lord*; which plainly intimates, that they made Christ the great Subject of their preaching, and that they endeavoured to speak of him in such a Manner, as to promote his Empire over the Hearts and Consciences of Men.

THEY made Christ the great Subject of their Preaching.

So they declare, *we preach Christ crucified, though to the Jews a Stumbling-Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness* †. At Corinth in particular, curious as it was, the Apostle declares, *I determined to know, i. e. to make known, and insist upon nothing among you save Jesus Christ, even that crucified Person* ‡; with whatever Scorn and Contempt such a

\* *Και τούτο εσαυραμενον*, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

† 1 Cor.

24.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 2.

Subject might be treated. And therefore it is observable, that *preaching Christ*, is sometimes used as a comprehensive Expression for all that the Apostles taught. Not that Paul or his Brethren neglected the great Doctrines of Natural Religion, which are so evidently the Foundation of the Gospel itself, that it is perfect Madness to pour Contempt upon them. We might in reason conclude, as we find it to have been fact, that when they came amongst Gentile and idolatrous Nations, they began with asserting the Being and Attributes of the only true God, the Universality of his Providence, and that Certainty of a State of future Retribution which is so naturally connected with it. All this they taught; but they did not stop here, for they well knew that it was their Duty to make these things the Plan on which to raise that glorious Superstructure which Christianity hath built upon them. They served God with their *Spirit in the Gospel of his Son* and therefore proclaimed the Glory of the Father, as reflected from the Face of Christ Jesus the Lord.

THEY established the Truth of his Deity, the Mystery of his Incarnation, the Necessity of his Atonement, the Perfection of his Righteousness, the Riches of his Grace. They described him as living on Earth an Example of universal Goodness, as dying on the Cross a Sacrifice for Sin, as rising from the Dead



and ascending into heaven, and as reigning there the Lord of universal Nature, and *Head over all to the Church* \*. You cannot but know, that these are their darling Topicks on which they most copiously insist in their Sermons and Writings which are transmitted to us : And if *St. Paul* at *Athens* † seems to touch more sparingly than usual on these important Doctrines, it is to be considered, that we have only the Beginning of a Discourse, in which the Rudeness of the Philosophers interrupted him, before he could proceed to open and establish those Doctrines which were peculiar to his Character as an *Embassador of Jesus*. And I am persuaded, that whoever impartially peruses the Epistles of that great Apostle, and observes not only his direct Arguments, but his lively and pathetick Digressions on this glorious Subject when it comes in his way, will not only see that *Paul* was delighted with it, but will himself be disposed to wish that every Christian Minister may copy after this great Original. Especially when it is considered,

THAT he and his Brethren preached Christ in such a Manner as might most effectually establish his Empire over the Hearts and Consciences of Men.

WE preach *Christ Jesus the Lord*, i. e. We preach him under the Character of the

\* Eph. i. 22:

† Acts xvii. 22—31.

great Lord, the Ruler and Governor of his Church. They very well knew, that the Design of Christianity was not merely to amuse the World, but to reform it; and that its sublimest Speculations were received and admitted in vain, if the Life were not regulated, and the Heart subdued by the Gospel. Therefore do they on all Occasions inculcate it, that *God had exalted Christ to be a Prince as well as a Saviour* \*; had ordained, and even *sworn in his Holiness, that every Knee should bow unto him* †. These good Men did not think it enough to declare the Grace of the Gospel, and then leave it to the Spirit of God, by his own immediate Agency, to draw the proper Consequences relating to Duty; but they expressly draw those Consequences themselves, and enter into a very large and particular detail of those Duties. They insist upon it with great Spirit and Earnestness, as a *faithful Saying, that those who have believed in God, should be careful to maintain good Works, and direct succeeding Ministers to affirm it constantly* ‡. They declared, that it was the very Purpose for which the saving Grace of God had appeared unto all Men, to teach them to *deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly* §. They urge Christians therefore to *yield themselves to God as alive*

\* Acts v. 31.

† Rom. xiv. 11.

‡ Tit. iii. 8.

§ Tit. ii. 11, 12.

from the Dead, and to employ their Members as Instruments of Righteousness\*. Beseeching them by the Mercies of God to present their Bodies as living Sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, which was indeed their most reasonable Service†. Nor did they think it beneath the Honour of the Evangelical Ministry, sometimes to insist on Arguments taken from the Terrors of the Law. Knowing those Terrors, they laboured to persuade Men by them; they affectionately warned them, that the Ground, which under divine Cultivation, brought forth nothing but Briars and Thorns, was nigh unto cursing, and its End was to be burned‡; that to those who did not obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there remained a certain fearful Expectation of Wrath, and fiery Indignation, which should devour them, yea, that they should be punished with everlasting Destruction, from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power§. This was the Apostolick Method of preaching Christ, so warning every Man, and teaching every Man, as that they might, through the Divine Blessing, most probably hope to present every Man perfect in Christ; that bearing their Fruit unto Holiness, their End might be everlasting Life.

You see I have generally expressed these things in Scripture-Language, that the Illus-

\* Rom. vi. 13.

† Rom. xii. 1.

‡ Heb. vi. 8.

§ 2 Thess. i. 8, 9.

† Col. i. 28.

tration and Proof might advance together. And if we desire to approve ourselves faithful in the same Cause, we must conduct our Ministration thus, and must also imitate these good Men in the third Particular of their Conduct, which alone now remains to be considered from these words: Which is,

3. THAT they endeavoured to serve their great Master, by the most humble and affectionate Condescension to those that were committed to their Care.

So far were they from lording it over their Brethren, that, according to the Example and Command of Christ himself, they owned themselves the *Servants of All*: Nor was merely an empty Compliment, for their Actions spoke it as well as their Words; they exercised great Humility and Condescension towards all, and they did it for Jesus sake.

THEY exercised great Humility and Condescension towards all their Brethren, not excepting even the meanest of them.

To this *Paul* frequently exhorted others *Mind not high things, but condescend to Men of low Estate* \*. *In Love serve and be subject to one another, and let each esteem others better than himself.* Thus he advised, and thus he acted; and his Brethren, no doubt behaved like him. They well *knew* their *Calling* as Christians, and plainly saw, that

\* Rom. xii. 16.



not many Mighty, not many Noble, were called, but that God had chosen the weak things of the World to confound the Mighty; that he had chosen the Poor in this World, rich in Faith, and Heirs of a Kingdom of eternal Glory\*. And if God would stoop thus low, they were cordially willing to do it. They could discern a Dignity in a Child of God, and an Heir of Glory, which shone through all their Poverty and Meanness of their Dress, and outward Appearance; inconsiderable Circumstances, which could not prevent these holy Men from *honouring them that feared the Lord*†, though they might want some of those Decorations which the vilest of Mankind may wear, and perhaps to their greater Infamy.

ST. Paul was a memorable Instance of this amiable Temper; though by his Education fit for higher Company, and from his early Years accustomed to it, he did not disdain the meanest of the People, and was not only easy of access to them, but visited them at their own Dwellings, and carried his Instructions and Consolations *from House to House*, even to those where he could expect no Entertainment, but such as arose from religious Converse, Society in Worship, and a Consciousness of being useful to the Souls of Men. And it is worthy of our Notice, that

\* 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. James ii. 5.

† Psal. xv. 4.

in subserviency to this great Design, this holy Man was a very affectionate Friend to their temporal Interests; and that to such a degree, as to be far from imagining that he had done his Part, when he had exhorted his Hearers to contribute liberally to the Supply of their indigent Brethren. Most instructive in this View, is the Address he makes to the Presbyters or Bishops of the Church of *Ephe-sus*; in which, appealing to them, that *they themselves knew that his own Hands had ministered to his Necessities, and those that were with him*; he adds, *I have shewed you that, so labouring, you ought to support the weak; and to remember the Words of the Lord Je-sus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive* \*.

THE same true greatness of Soul which engaged him chearfully to contribute out of his small Stock, for the Relief of those that were yet more necessitous than himself, disposed him with great Condescension and Tendernefs to bear the Infirmities of his People and in many Instances to sacrifice his own Taste and Humour to theirs. *Who was weak, and he was not weak? Who was offended, and he did not burn* † with Desire to remove the Offence? When his Converts behaved with too much of the Peevishness and Perverseness of Children, he did not haugh

\* Acts xx. 34, 35.

† 2 Cor. xi. 29.

tilly chastise them; but rather chose tenderly to expostulate with them, and if possible to love them out of their Follies. He put on not only the Bowels of a Father, but the Indulgence of a Nurse towards them; *We were,* says he, *gentle amongst you, even as a Nurse cherisheth her Children, and ready to have imparted to you, not only the Gospel of Christ, but our own Souls or Lives also, i. e. to have died, as we lived, for your Service, because you were singularly dear to us\*.*

THIS was the governing Temper of St. Paul, and it carried him through some Circumstances which required great and resolute Self-denial; *He became all things to all Men, if by any means he might gain some sincere Converts to the Gospel.* And in particular, *to the Jews he became as a Jew, that he might gain them,* i. e. he voluntarily laid himself under all the Restraints of the *Mosaic Law*, though he knew it was now abolished, that he might as a Christian Apostle convert the *Jews*. And this he carries so far, as to declare his Readiness, not only to forbear those kinds of Food which the Law of *Moses* pronounceth unclean, but to give up all animal Diet, and subsist intirely on Vegetables, rather than he would grieve and offend his Brethren, i. e. the feeblest Christian. *If Meat,* says he, *make my Brother to offend,*

\* 1. Thes. ii. 7, 8.

*I will eat no Flesh while the World standeth.* Thus, though the Apostles were free from All, they nevertheless voluntarily became the *Servants of All* \*, and indeed condescended to do, and forbear many things, because disagreeable to their Christian Brethren, which few hired Servants would have done or forbore out of Regard to those who were properly their Masters. But let us not fail to remember that

THEY did all this for the sake of Christ and his Gospel.

*Ourselves your Servants for Jesus sake.* It is certain, that such Condescensions as we have been describing, are either great or mean, according to the Principle from whence they proceed. Ambition can creep, that it may soar; and sooth, that it may afterwards insult. But the Apostles stooped, that they might raise others; and pleased, that they might profit. We, says St. Paul, please all Men to their good for their Edification. This was their great Concern, that *whether they eat or drank, or whatever they did, they might do all to the Glory of God* †. This was their earnest Expectation and their Hope, that in all things Christ might be glorified in them, *whether by their Life or their Death* ‡. They sacrificed not only their Humour and their Ease, but their Life itself, to the great Purposes of pleas-

\* 1 Cor. ix. 19, 20.

† 1 Cor. x. 31.

‡ Phil. i. 20.



ing and serving the blessed Jesus; and Paul spake the Sentiments of them all, when he said, *Neither Bonds nor Imprisonments move me; nor do I account my Life dear unto me, that I may finish my Course with Joy, and the Ministry I have received of the Lord\**. But while I insist on such Expressions as these, I do in part anticipate what I am to offer under the second Head. Where I proposed,

II. To consider what were the Principles by which they were animated to so noble a Temper and Conduct.

I THE rather enter into the Survey of them, as we shall find they were not only suited to the Age and Circumstances of the Apostles, but ought also to have a very great Influence upon us, whom God has favoured so far as to *count us faithful*, putting us into something of the same *Ministry* with them, which can never be comfortably and honourably fulfilled, but by those who govern themselves by the like Maxims and Principles. They were undoubtedly influenced by an affectionate Love to the blessed Redeemer, a pious Zeal for the Glory of God in the Salvation of Souls, and a prudent Regard to their own present and future Happiness. And if these great Motives have their due Weight with us, we

\* Acts xx. 24.

shall not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves the Servants of his People for his sake.

I. THE Apostles were engaged to the Conduct we have described, by a most grateful Affection to the blessed Redeemer.

THAT dear Name is *precious* to every believing Soul, and how precious it was to these holy Men, almost every Page of their Writings will declare. Divine Grace had deeply humbled them under the Conviction of their own Guilt and Weakness, and then taught them to view the Lord Jesus Christ as *made of God unto them Wisdom and Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption\**. They *knew the Grace of the Son of God* in descending, and living, and dying for their Salvation; and in passing through all the most dreadful Scenes of suffering which Imagination can suggest, with a Love to them, which all those *Waters could not quench, nor the Floods drown*. And believing this, they could not but speak in his Cause, they could not but desire to spend and be spent in his Service. On this Principle therefore doth Paul vindicate those Ardours of Zeal, which a profane World censured as Enthusiasm and Madness. *If we are besides ourself, it is to God for the Love of Christ constraineth us while we thus judge†, and approve the Argu-*

\* 1 Cor. i. 30.

† 2 Cor. v. 14.

ment in the coolest Moments of Reflection, that if one died for all, then were all dead; for had they not been in a State of Condemnation and Death, they would not have needed such a Ransom. *And he died, that we, who live only in consequence of his dying Love, should not henceforth live to our selves, but to him that died for us, and rose again.* And we may assure ourselves, that while their Souls were thus drawn with the *Cords of a Man, and the Bands of Love \**, they saw a peculiar Beauty in the Condescensions of so great a Personage and so dear a Friend, which inclined them with Pleasure to trace his Steps, in making themselves the Servants of others for his sake, who took upon him *the Form of a Servant †*, though he were *Lord of all*.

AND ought not these Considerations, my Brethren, to have a constraining Force upon us? Was it for the sake of the Apostles alone, that the blessed Jesus stooped so low, and bore so much? Did he not *love us, and give himself for us ‡*, and was not the News of our Salvation contained in those glad Tidings which he brought from Heaven, which he proclaimed on Earth, publishing them with long continued Labour, and at length sealing them with his Blood? Have not we our Lot amongst his People? nay, I will add,

\* Hof. xi. 4.

† Phil. ii. 7.

‡ Gal. ii. 20.

are we not distinguished from most of the rest of them, by his Favour, in that he hath committed to our Trust his glorious Gospel, the important Cause that lay so near his Heart, the great End of his Toils and his Sufferings? And where is our Gratitude, where is our Fidelity, where is our common Integrity, if we can forget such Engagements, and lose our Concern for that Gospel, in a mean Solitude about our own Applause, or Interest, or Dominion? I trust, my Brethren, it will never so be lost. I am persuaded, through divine Grace, there are those amongst us, whose Bosoms glow with such undissembled Love, that we can truly say, we reckon the Title of Servants of Christ, and of the Church for his sake, a thousand times more honourable than to be called, and to be, the Lords of the whole World; that we had rather approve ourselves the faithful Interpreters of his Laws, than see assembled Nations bowing down before us, and with the profoundest Submission receiving Law at our Mouths.

2. THE Apostles were animated to the Conduct we have been reviewing, by a pious Zeal, for the Glory of God in the Salvation of Souls.

THEY well knew, that the Grace of the Father was the original Source of all the Blessings they received by the Interposition of the Son, and their Hearts were so subjected and united to God, that they could not fail



of being tenderly concerned, that being *bought with such a Price*, and maintained by such a constant Emanation of divine Favour and Bounty, they might *glorify God with their Bodies and their Spirit*, which they owned to be *the Lord's*\*, by so many important Claims.

AND they must farther infer from the complete All-sufficiency of the divine Being, that the only way whereby we are capable of glorifying him, is by promoting the Display of his Attributes; which are most nobly illustrated in the Perfection and Happiness of his rational Creatures; especially their final and eternal Happiness. It plainly appears from the whole Strain of the Apostles Writings, that those holy Men were deeply penetrated with the Views of an invisible World: and as it was their great Concern for themselves, that their own Souls *might be given them for a Prey*†; so Sentiments of Compassion and Humanity joined with those of Piety, to engage them to wish and labour the Salvation of others.

THEY certainly knew, however others might forget it, that every human Creature hath in its Breast an immortal Soul, which must survive not only the Dissolution of the Body, but the Wreck of this lower World; Soul that by its original Constitution was

\* 1 Cor. vi. ult.

† Jer. xlv. 5.

capable of shining in the Image of God, and the Glories of Paradise, when the *Sun* should be *turned into Darkneſs, and the Moon into Blood*. They were likewise ſenſible, that theſe precious Souls were naturally in a very dangerous State, and by Sin ſtood expoſed to everlaſting Darkneſs, Deſpair and Ruin. And this appeared to them ſuch a lamentable Sight, that they could not but *weep* over thoſe whoſe *End* would ſo probably be *Deſtruction* \*. And when they ſaw them going on in a gay Inſenſibility of Danger, and a proud Confidence, on the very Borders of Hell, it *cut them to the Heart*, and put an Eagerneſs and Pathos into the Manner of their Addreſs, which nothing but ſuch an infinite Concern could have given. They were attempting to *recover thoſe out of the Snare of the Devil, who were led Captives by him at his Pleaſure* †; to turn *Men from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God* ‡, that, inſtead of meeting all the Terrors of his Wrath, and ſinking into eternal Deſtruction, they might receive the *Forgivenenſs of their Sins, and an Inheritance amongſt his ſanctified People*. And while this was the View in which they regarded them, who can wonder, that they did as it were *travail in Birth for their Conversion* §? Who can wonder if it appeared to them even an inhuman thing, to be more

\* Phil. iii. 19.

† 2 Tim. ii. 26.

‡ Acts xxvi. 18.

§ Gal. iv. 19.

solicitous about soothing Mens' Ears, or gaining an Influence over Mens temporal Concerns, than saving their souls? As it would indeed be a more cruel kind of Folly, than for a Physician to be more careful that his Bill were elegantly written, than that the Life of his Patient should be saved by the Suitableness of the Prescription.

I MUST farther add, in order to complete the Argument, that the Apostles well knew, that nothing was so likely to save the perishing Souls of Men, as the great Doctrines of the everlasting Gospel; nothing so like to recover them, when fainting and dying, as the vital Savour of a Redeemer's Name; which is indeed the *Power of God to the Salvation of every one that believeth* \*. This engaged them, in this Manner, to *preach Christ Jesus the Lord*; and I hope, my Brethren, we shall never imagine, that our Wisdom can find out another more effectual way. I hope we shall never practise so dangerous Complaisance to the Unbelievers of the present Age, as to wave the Gospel, that we may accommodate ourselves to their Taste; which if we do, we may indeed preserve the Name of Virtue, but I fear we shall destroy the thing itself; lose it in our Congregations, and probably in our Hearts too. For, I confess, it seems to me much more probable, that the

\* Rom. i. 17.

Doctrines of natural Religion alone should be blessed as the Means of reforming Heathens, who never heard of Christianity, than that they should have much effect upon those who under the Profession of it, slight its most glorious Peculiarities; as if the Revelation of Jesus were a mere incumbrance, which, while we own it to be true, we might nevertheless forget, without great Danger, or much Inconvenience. But if we imbibe the Spirit of the Apostles, and make their Conduct the Model of ours, we may chearfully expect that Presence of God with us, in consequence of which the great Ends of our Ministry may be answered, to the Reformation of Mens Lives, and the Salvation of their Souls.

How glorious a Hope! how rich a recompence for all the Fatigue, for all the Condescension, for all the Self-denial which our Office may require! Most forcibly doth St. *James* express the Importance of the Thought, if one Man be the happy Instrument of gaining another to the Cause of Truth and Holiness, *let him know, let him pause upon it and reflect, that he who converteth a Sinner from the Error of his ways, shall save a Soul from Death\**, an immortal Soul! And how much is comprehended in those few Words? We are sometimes perhaps ready to envy the Opportunity which the great Men of the World

\* James v. 20.



have to promote the Happiness of others, and it is the most generous, and indeed the only rational View in which Riches and Power can be desired. But let us remember, my Brethren, such is the Nature of an immortal Soul, that to bring it into the way to eternal Life, is a greater good than any merely temporal Blessing, which can be conferred upon the greatest Number of Men for the longest Duration in the present World. And it is most certain, that the Moment will at length come, when the Sum of Happiness which hath actually been enjoyed by every particular Soul, that we have led into that blessed World, will be greater than what the most uninterrupted Peace, Liberty, and Plenty could have given to the most numerous Nations, in a hundred, or a thousand, or ten thousand Years. Let so sublime Thought animate our Pursuit, and make us *willing to spend and be spent* in such a Service\*.

3. THE Apostles well knew, that by such Conduct as we have now been surveying, their own present and future Happiness would be most effectually secured.

THEY seemed indeed to sacrifice their present Interest, and in many important Instances they did so; yet surely they found rich Equivalent in the Consciousness of such Temper, and a Prospect of that Reward which would through Grace attend it.

\* 2 Cor. xii. 15.

THE

THE Pleasures of *Gratitude* and *Humility*, are a thousand times superior to that which can arise from gratifying the Senses, or even from Improvements in Science. I hope all that hear me this Day, know the Delight of serving a Friend whom we highly esteem and love; many of us I question not do particularly know how agreeable it is to find some Opportunity of expressing our cordial Sense of those Favours, which it is impossible for us fully to repay. Let us judge by that, how delightful it must be to these good Men, when their Hearts were full of the most lively and penetrating Sense of Redeemer's Love, to see themselves in such a Situation, as that their whole Lives should be spent in serving his Interest, and every Day of them should do something to promote it.

AND the Influence which their labours have upon the *Happiness of Mankind*, must also add a most delightful Relish to them. Our Nature is so constituted by the wise and gracious Author of it, that some Degrees of Pleasure inseparably attend every Attempt for the Improvement of any part of his Creation, even the meanest. 'Tis pleasant to view a Spot of Ground, which from a barren and useless Wild has been manured and cultivated, planted and adorned by human Industry, so that it is reduced to a fruitful Garden or Field; and he who hath laboured to effect it, reviews

with double Satisfaction. It is much more delightful to have been instrumental in forming and cultivating the Mind, and reducing those who were once little better than Savages to Discipline and Arts, to the Improvements and Elegancies of Life, whereby they may as it were be broken into Men; but surely the Apostles must with incomparably greater Satisfaction look round about them, and see whole Regions inlightened by the Rays which they had diffused; thousands of their Fellow-Creatures recovered from Darkneſs and Ignorance, Superſtition and Vice, and formed to wiſe, regular, noble Sentiments, ſubjected to God, united to Chriſt, and conducted into the ways of Peace and Life by their Means. Accordingly, I doubt not, but you have often obſerved in how ſublime and pathetick a Manner St. *Paul* expreſſeth himſelf on this Occaſion, in the Name of his Brethren as well as in his own, in the Progreſs of this Epistle \*. We approve ourſelves, ſays he, the *Ministers of God*, in all the various Circumſtances through which we paſs, in *Honour and Diſhonour*, treated indeed by the World as *Deceivers*, yet conſcious to ourſelves that we are *true*, and the great Patrons of Truth; as obſcure and *unknown* to a proud and inſolent World, who affect to overlook us with ſovereign Contempt, yet *well known*

\* 2 Cor. vi. 8—10.

even by the happiest Tokens to those blessed Souls who are brought home to God by our Means; *as dying daily, yet behold we live,* through the singular Interposition of our great Lord for our Preservation; *as sorrowful* on account of various Calamities that surround us, and *yet in Spirit always rejoicing,* because though we appear in the World *as poor* in these things, yet we are *making rich* in Grace and Glory. Blessed Leaders in the Army of Christ! Who would not emulate such a Character and State? who would not wish for your Hardships and Trials, might his Supports and Success be proportionable to yours? Such were the Pleasures they found in *preaching Christ Jesus the Lord*; and undoubtedly their generous Minds delighted to do it in the condescending Manner we have described. To converse with their Flock in such a free easy obliging way, as their Brethren, as their Servants for Jesus sake, on the Foot of equal and respectful Friendship suited their Taste and their Temper much better than all the Homage, and all the Revenues, which secular Power could have given, and secular Terror could have extorted.

I ONLY add in the Conclusion of this Head that the Apostles were influenced to such Conduct by *a Regard to their own eternal Interest.*

THAT great important Concern which swallowed up all others in their Mind, and



with which nothing here seemed by any Means worthy to be compared. *Paul* himself did not think it unfit to reflect, and to say, *A Necessity is laid upon me, and woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel* \*. He well knew, that if such Vigilance was expected from a *Jewish* Prophet, that the Souls who perished by his neglect should be by God required at his Hand †, the Danger of such a Neglect under the Christian Dispensation, would be yet greater in Proportion to the clearer Degree of Evidence with which *Life and Immortality* was brought to Light ‡. He therefore, and his Associates in this important Work, made it their Care, as himself expresseth it, *to watch for Souls as those that must give an Account*, and were exceedingly solicitous, that they might do it *with Joy and not with Grief* §. They looked on their Converts as those who should be their *Crown and rejoicing in the Day of the Lord* †; and their delightful Companions in the Glories of the heavenly World. And when, conscious that through the divine Assistance they had fought the good Fight, and finished their Course, and kept their Fidelity, they were humbly bold to look forward with chearful Expectation as well as Desire, *to that Crown of Life which the Lord had laid up for all his faithful Servants, that love his Appearance* ||. Such

\* 1 Cor. ix. 16.

† Ezek. iii. 18.

‡ 2 Tim. i. 10.

§ Heb. xiii. 17.

† 1 Theff. ii. 19.

|| 2 Tim. iv. 8.

may our Hopes be, my Fathers and Brethren, and such our Triumphs in the near Views of Death and Eternity. Our Days are passing away apace, and no secular Powers or Advantages can prolong them; nay, perhaps, were we in the Number of the richest and greatest of those that call themselves the Ministers of Christ, Life might run out only so much the sooner, while on the one Hand the Baits of Luxury, and on the other, the Cries of the Oppressed, might concur to shorten it. When this Scene of Vanity is closing, when we are to exchange every Ornament for the Dress of Death, and all the Amusements and Cares of Mortality, for the Solemnities of the eternal State; in that awful Hour, I say, it will be no Grief of Heart to us, that we have chosen in all Humility to serve Christ and the Souls of Men, rather than to make our Names great, and our Families wealthy. And when we come to appear in the Presence of that great Redeemer, who hath been witness to all our Conduct, and all our Designs, we shall really find that we have lost nothing by whatever we have sacrificed to his Cause and Interest. The Applause of thousands is but an empty sound when compared with that of *Well done, good and faithful Servant* \*, and all the Honours and Possessions which the greatest Princes could

\* Mat. xxv. 23.

bestow, would be *lighter than Vanity, when laid in the Balance* with that unfading *Crown of Glory*, which every faithful Minister may expect, *when Christ the chief Shepherd shall appear* \*.

I HAVE dilated so much on these pleasant and copious Topicks, that I have hardly left myself Time,

III. So much as to mention the Reflections which may naturally arise from what we have been hearing. You will easily apprehend they are such as these.

How greatly is the Truth of Christianity confirmed by the Character of those who were first employed in the Publication of it; who gave the greatest Evidence that can possibly be imagined of their being intirely devoted to the sacred Cause of Truth and Piety, and expressed, as we have heard, the most disinterested and self-denying Zeal in the Service of both.

How happy is it for the Christian Cause, that these original Monuments are still preserved, and that we are not left to form an Idea of its Ministers merely from the general History of succeeding and distant Ages, or by the Canons and Decrees of the greatest Part of Ecclesiastical Councils; which are commonly drawn up with so different a Spirit,

\* 1 Pet. v. 4.

that,

that, were we to judge by them alone, Charity would have inclined us to hope, that those who called themselves the chief Successors of the Apostles, had never heard of the Character of those holy Men; but had rather formed their Conduct, and even their Maxims too, I will not say by the *Jewish*, but by the *Heathen* Priesthood.

NEVERTHELESS let us bless God, that in the midst of so general a Depravation, there have been in all Ages, and particularly in our own, a select Remnant, who have not defiled their Garments, nor prostituted their sacred Character and Office to those *Idols of Jealousy*, which have been so shamefully erected even in the House of the Lord. Persons, so far as I can judge, of all Denominations, both of established and separate Churches, at Home and Abroad, who have been, and are in their respective Spheres, *burning and shining Lights*; Men of God, who however differing in Opinion, in Discipline, or in Worship, have agreed to *love the Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity*, to bow their Hearts and Souls to the Obedience of his Laws, to value the Souls committed to their Care, serving them in Humility and Love, candidly excusing the Frailties of their Brethren, praying, that *wherein they were otherwise minded*, than Reason and Scripture directed, that *God would in his own Time and way reveal it unto them*, and in the mean time



time labouring, that *whereunto they had already attained, they might walk by the same Rule, and might mind the same thing* \*.

LET us daily bow our Knees in the most importunate Supplications to the God of Grace and of Peace, that this happy Number may be increased; and as he is from Time to Time laying those in the Dust, who were once the Joy of our Assemblies, and the Glory of their Profession, let us tenderly feel, let us deeply lament the Desolations of his Sanctuary †. And let us earnestly pray, that he would raise up in all the Churches a Generation of faithful and laborious, serious and spiritual, candid and evangelical Ministers, that *instead of the Fathers there may be the Children* ‡, by means of

\* Phil. iii. 16.

† N. B. This Sermon was preached a few Days after the Death of that great Man of God, the truly Reverend and Excellent Mr. DAVID SOME of *Harborough*, whom God was pleased to favour with a serene and chearful Exit, suited to the eminent Piety and Usefulness of his Life. His dying Command hath silenced the Attempt which some of his surviving Friends would gladly have made to embalm his Memory for the Instruction of those that are yet to come, but I am well satisfied, that, considering how very generally he was known, he hath left a most honourable Testimony in the Hearts of thousands, that he was one of the brightest Ornaments of the Gospel and the Ministry which the Age hath produced; and that all who had any Intimacy with him, must have esteemed his Friendship amongst the greatest Blessings of Life, and the Loss of him amongst its greatest Calamities. He died *May* 29. 1737. in his 57th Year, and surely I have never seen greater Reason to cry out, My Father, My Father! the Chariots of *Israel*, and the Horsemen thereof.

‡ Psal. xlv. 16.

whom

whom a *People* that are yet to be born may see the *Salvation of our God* in its genuine Glories.

AND this, in Connection with the Subject before us, might also lead us farther to reflect, how important a Part of an Education for the Ministry it is, to endeavour to lead young People into the knowledge of this *Jesus*, whom their Office obligeth them to preach and to serve. Polite Literature is not by any means to be neglected, nor will it be despised by any but those who know not what it is, yet surely it is not *the one thing needful*. The sacred Scriptures are the grand Magazine whence the most important, and therefore I think by far the greatest Number of Academical Lectures are to be drawn. And they who are honoured with a Charge of so great importance to the Church, should surely be concerned, that those of the rising Age in whose Hands this invaluable Treasure of the Gospel is to be deposited, may not rest in a cold speculative Acquaintance, either with the Evidences, or Contents of it; but may feel its vital transforming Power, and speak of this great Redeemer, as of one on whom they have themselves believed, and whom *their own Souls* do most cordially love.

BUT I must wave the Prosecution of these copious Reflections, to conclude with two which are yet more immediately the Con-

cern of those who attend on Gospel-Ordinances; and which I would particularly recommend to you my Friends of this Society, who are now, through divine Providence, so well settled *with a Workman that needs not be ashamed*, and one whom you so highly and justly esteem.

THINK how solicitous you should be to know and acknowledge Christ Jesus as your Lord.

I KNOW you think it your Happiness often to hear of him, O let it not be in vain. Own his Authority in your Lives as well as your Assemblies, or those who have most frequently preached him to you, will be the wisest and severest Witnesses against you on that dreadful Day, when all that have not bowed to his Sceptre, must fall by his word.

AND, to add no more, think also how willing you should be to use the Assistance of your Ministers, as your Servants for Jesus sake.

Do not neglect to attend on their Ministrations, and thereby shut out Wisdom and Mercy at its first Entrance. Do not increase their Burden by any unkind Usage, lest, by taking away their Spirits, you may injure your selves, and disable them from doing you that Service, in which they are cheerfully spending their Lives, though perhaps they apprehend they are thereby shortening them.

F

And

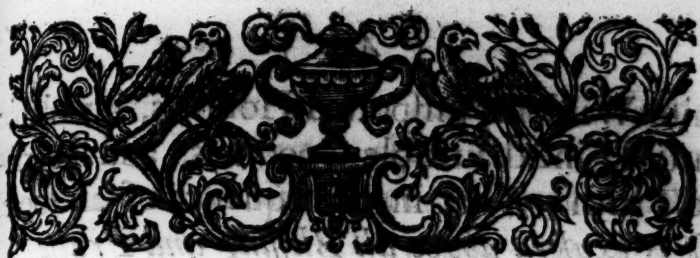
AND, once more, be not unwilling to use a proper Freedom with them in your religious Concerns. Officiously to pry into the Secrets of Families and Persons, is a Meanness which a generous Man will scorn; and particularly to know them is a Burden, and often a Snare too, which a wise Man will gladly decline: But some Knowledge of your spiritual State and Experience is necessary to our knowing how to address you, and to address God on your Account. Nor can you expect such suitable Assistance from your spiritual Physicians, as might otherwise be hoped for, if you will not communicate to them some Particulars of your Complaints.

ON the whole, my dearly Beloved, *fulfill* you our Joy\*, and let it be your great Care so to receive our Message, and so to improve it, that it may be the Delight of our Souls now to proclaim the Honours of our Redeemer amongst you, as your Servants for Jesus sake, and that the more tenderly we love you, the more abundant Satisfaction we may find in our present Labours, and of your future Account. *Amen.*

\* Phil. ii. 17.

And





A

# Confession of Faith,

Delivered at his

## ORDINATION,

By WILLIAM JOHNSTON, A.M.



It is evident from the Light of Nature, were there no extraordinary Revelation to confirm it, that there is one Supreme Independent Being, the Source and Fountain of all things, and on whom all things depend; who is *the only living and true God.*

II. I believe, that this Supreme God is possessed of all possible Perfections: That he is an eternal, and an unchangeable Spirit; and hath absolute Sovereignty, almighty Power, infinite

finite Wisdom, unspotted Holiness, inviolable Justice, inexhaustible Goodness, and invariable Truth : That in consequence of all these, *He is exalted above all Blessing and Praise \**.

III. I believe, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are not the Device of carnal Policy, nor the pious Fraud of well-designing Men but that they are indeed the Word of God, that they were dictated by his Holy Spirit. *Holy Men of God having spoken and written them, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost †.*

IV. I believe, that these Scriptures do contain all things necessary to be known, believed, and done, in order to Salvation; *for they are able to make us wise thereunto, thro' Faith that is in Christ Jesus ‡ : That therefore they are the only Rule of Faith and Practice, the sole Test by which all religious Doctrines are to be tried, and all Controversies to be decided; so profitable are they for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that by an Acquaintance with them, the Man of God, that is, the Christian Minister, may be perfected and thoroughly furnished § for the Discharge of his whole Office.* I believe therefore, that all oral or apocryphal Traditions are unnecessary in Point of Salvation; and that such as are contrary to the Scriptures, are utterly to be rejected.

\* Neh. ix. 5.  
§ 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

† 2 Pet. i. 21.

‡ 2 Tim. iii. 15

V. UPON

V. UPON the divine Authority of these Scriptures, I believe, that in this Supreme Godhead there are three distinct Persons, or Substances, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; all of them partaking of the same divine Nature, and all consequently equal in each glorious Perfection, though distinguished by their personal Properties, and so intimately united, that they are not three different Gods, but one God: *There are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one\**.

VI. I believe, that as every rational Agent would willingly determine his own Concerns in respect of Futurity as far as possible, that he may not be in any uncertainty about them; so there is nothing that cometh to pass, but what God did eternally and unchangeably decree, according to his own absolute, yet unerring Will and good Pleasure. That all things which do not throw Dishonour upon the divine Perfections, were established by a direct Decree. That Sin, because its absurd that God should in any respect be the Author of it, cometh to pass as the Consequence of a permissive Decree; that such a Decree lays no constraint upon the Will of the Man, nor offereth any Violence to his rational Faculties; but that whenever he sinneth, he sin-

\* 1 John v. 7.

neth without any Influence from God invincibly determining him thereunto: So that *no Man when he is tempted can say, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any Man* \*.

VII. I believe, in pursuance to his Decrees, God did make the Heavens and the Earth, and all the Creatures contained therein, whether of a nobler or meaner order, and that he brought them out of nothing; not with any Toil or Labour, but that with perfect ease, by the Word of his Almighty Power, he commanded them into Existence: *He spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast* †.

VIII. I believe also, that God, according to his Decrees, doth rule and govern the natural and moral Worlds; that it is by his constant Providence, Energy or Direction, all the celestial Bodies answer the end for which he made them, so as giving us Summer and Winter Seed-time and Harvest, and the various Circumstances of these Seasons, and in the same manner that all second Causes owe their Efficacy to the Operation of their original Cause. I believe, that he preserveth the various Species and Individuals of Animals, in such a manner as to answer the Ends of his own Glory; and that he presideth over the Affairs of his reasonable Creatures both in

\* James i. 13.

† Psal. xxxiii. 9.



Heaven and Earth. That the disposal of Kingdoms, subordinate Governments, Possessions, and the like, are in his Hands; and he giveth them to whomsoever he pleaseth. That he directeth and ordereth the Birth, Life, Death, Kindred, Habitation, Calling, and Condition of every Man, whether prosperous or adverse. That he over-ruleth and governeth all the Actions of Angels, Men and Devils; so that all his Decrees concerning them are fully accomplished, and his own Glory most effectually promoted. *Thus he doth according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can stay his Hand, or say unto him, What dost thou \*?*

IX. I believe, that God made *Adam* and *Eve*, our first Parents, *in the Likeness of his own Image*, with all the Powers and Faculties that were necessary for the Perfection and Happiness of their Nature: That they had sufficient Ability to know and do the Will of God, without the least Bias toward Sin; though at the same Time liable to fall from that State of Perfection. *God made Man upright.*

X. I believe, that *Adam* the first Man and Father of us all, being tempted by *Eve*, who was beguiled by the Serpent, did eat of the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil †*,

\* Dan. iv. 35.      † Eccles. vii. 29.      † Gen. iii. 6.

which

which God had forbidden him with the Commination of Death; and that thus he broke the Covenant of Works, the Condition of which was perfect Obedience. And therefore, I believe, that by that Act of Disobedience he forfeited the Favour of God, his Right to the Enjoyment of Paradise; that he lost the Rectitude of his Nature, and debased the noble Powers of his Soul, became mortal, and obnoxious to the Wrath of God both in this Life, and that which is to come.

XI. I believe, that God did deal with *Adam* as the foederal Head of all his Posterity; and therefore, that the Evils which he brought upon himself, he brought also upon them. *By the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation: By one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners\*.*

XII. I believe, that God from Eternity foreseeing that the whole Human Race would fall into this unhappy Condition, was graciously pleased, of his own free Will and Choice, and not on the Consideration or Foresight of the Faith and Holiness of any, to elect a certain Number of Men, in Christ Jesus, unto eternal Life, and to the Means necessary thereunto, even Faith and Holiness. *According as he hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy, and without blame before him*

\* Rom. v. 18, 19.

in Love \*. He hath saved us, and called us with a holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the World began †.

XIII. I believe that this Election was made upon Condition, that the Son of God the second Person of the glorious Three, should in the Fulness of Time assume our Nature, and in that Nature should pay full and complete Satisfaction to the offended Justice of God; the Claims of which would otherwise have required the Punishment of the Sinner, and have render'd God inexorable: Wherefore he is called *a Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World* ‡.

XIV. I believe that in the Fulness of Time the Son of God, tho' by an essential Union one with the Father, did actually abase himself, and take upon him our Natures, with all the finless Infirmities thereof; that he had a real human Soul and Body, which he so intimately united to his Deity, that what was done in either of his Natures, may properly be ascribed to the whole Person, and the Son of David, with the exactest Propriety, may be called the incarnate Son of God. And I believe, that it is by virtue of this strict Union between the two Natures of Christ, that his Obedience in, and Sacrifice of

\* Eph. i. 4.

† 2 Tim. i. 9.

‡ Rev. xiii. 8.

his human Nature, became full and proper Satisfaction to the Justice of God in behalf of Men.

XV. I believe, that in his human Nature when on Earth, he wrought out a full and perfect Righteousness for the Justification of God's Elect: That this Righteousness is both active and passive Obedience to the Will of God, by which he fulfilled the Law, and made Atonement for Sin; and that 'tis only by virtue of this Righteousness, imputed to the Elect, that they are justified, and consequently adopted, sanctified and saved. *by the Offence of one Judgment, came upon Men to Condemnation; even so by the Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon all unto Justification of Life: As by one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners; so by the Obedience of one, many shall be made righteous\*.*

XVI. Tho' the Efficacy of Christ's Obedience and Sufferings doth only extend to the Elect; yet I believe, that none of those who perish, shall have Cause to say in the great Day of Accounts, that they perish because there was not necessary Provision made for their Salvation: Since their coming short of it is not owing to such a Want; but to their wilful Hardness and Impenitency, in that they will not come unto Christ that they may

\* Rom. v. 18, 19.



Life; nor fly to the Shelter of his gracious Wings, even when he offering to gather them, *as a Hen gathereth her Chickens\**. I believe, therefore, whosoever contemn the Offers of salvation, made in the Gospel (and they are made to all to whom the Gospel cometh) that they shall perish for this their Contempt, that they shall be liable to a sorer Condemnation than those who never heard of the Gospel; *yea, that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment, than for them †*.

XVII. I believe that our dear Redeemer rose from the Dead on the third Day after his crucifixion, which I consider as an Earnest of our Resurrection at the Great Day, and which in Connection with the Effusion of the Spirit, I look on as an incontestible Proof that he was sent of God, and that his Obedience and the Sacrifice which he offer'd up to him on behalf of Sinners, were fully accepted by him.

XVIII. I believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, having continued forty Days upon the Earth, after his Resurrection (both that he might give full Proof thereof, and might more perfectly instruct his Apostles in the Principles of his holy Religion †) visibly ascended up to Heaven ‡: Which also I consider as a Pledge of our Ascension thither, that so we *may be*

Mat. xxiii. 37.

† Mat. x. 15.

‡ Acts i. 9.

*for ever with the Lord, in that blessed World whither the Fore-runner is for us entered\*.*

XIX. I believe that Christ is *now sitting at the Right-hand of the Father †*, advanced to the highest Authority, *having all Power in Heaven and Earth committed unto him ‡*; that by this Power he presideth over the natural and moral Worlds, subjecteth his People to himself, governs them as his own, and defendeth them from all his Enemies and theirs.

XX. I believe that Christ doth now appear in the Presence of God to intercede as a great High-Priest for his People, that he pleadeth his own perfect Righteousness for them with God the Father, and presenteth their Prayers and Services to him with the abundant Incense of his own Merits. I believe that his Intercession is always successful, and therefore that by virtue thereof he distributeth to a Pardon, and all Grace necessary to bring them safely thro' this World to the Region of Glory. In a word, *that he is able to save to the uttermost all those that come unto God by him §*; seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession.

XXI. I believe that Faith is the Instrument by which the Elect are interested in the Salvation wrought out by Christ. *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life*

\* Heb. vi. 20.

† Ephes. i. 20.

‡ Mat. xxviii.

§ Heb. vii. 25.

but the Wrath of God abideth on him\*. Now this Faith I take to be such an Assent of the Mind to Christ's Ability and Willingness to save us, as produceth a prevailing Disposition to accept of him, in the Gospel Terms, and to trust to him alone for Salvation.

XXIII. I believe a sincere, and in the main, successful Endeavour to perform the various Precepts of the Gospel, whether they contain our Duty to God, our Neighbour, or ourselves, is inseparably connected with this saving Faith; *for Faith without Works is dead*†. And tho' it is too evidently possible, that a real Believer may in some Instances wander from the Path of God's Commandments, yet I believe he will not contentedly remain under the Guilt and in the Practice of Sin, but will sooner or later return to God by hearty Repentance, will plead for Pardon through the Blood of Jesus, will form Purposes of better Obedience, and study and endeavour to stand *complete in the whole Will of God*.

XXIII. I believe that ever since the Fall, such a fatal Depravity has over-spread our whole Race, that no mere Man is able to exercise this Faith and Holiness without superior Assistances; the Understanding, Will and Affections, are by Nature so closely employed, and so obstinately bent on carnal Things, that the natural Man will not ex-

\* John iii. 36.

† Jam. ii. 26.

ercise these Powers of his Soul about those that are divine; that, therefore there is a real Impotency in every Man to do that which God requires of him. *The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned* \*. *The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be* †.

XXIV. I believe therefore the Goodness and Compassion of God to his elected People is so great, that he hath not only given his Son to purchase Salvation for them, but also his Holy Spirit to dispose them to accept of it according to the Gospel: That it is the Office of this blessed Spirit to illuminate their Understandings, that they may see in a just Light their Danger by Sin, and the Way of Deliverance by Christ; to give their Souls an effectual Turn from sensual to spiritual Objects; to mortify their Corruptions, strengthen them against Temptations, and to carry on the Work of Sanctification in them, till they shall be meet to partake of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.

XXV. I believe that the Holy Ghost doth ordinarily begin and carry on this Work of Faith and Holiness in the Elect, by the Instrumentality of his revealed Word. *For the Gospel of Christ is the Power of God unto Sa*

\* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

† Rom. viii. 7.



vation, to every one that believeth \*; that we are not therefore to impute to the Holy Ghost any of our own Fancies concerning religious Matters, or the Propensity of our Minds to any one particular Thing, which is not directly, or by Consequence contain'd and required in the Scriptures, much less any thing that is contrary to them: That therefore we should diligently read and meditate on the Scriptures, and attend the publick Ordinances appointed for explaining and inculcating them, if we desire and expect the Spirit of God to produce Faith and Holiness in us.

XXVI. I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has establish'd two Ordinances in his Church, which are not to be abolished till the End of the World, Baptism and the Lord's-supper, the Symbols whereof are Water in the one, and Bread and Wine in the other: That tho' these Symbols are material and sensible Elements, yet are they wisely adapted to represent Christ and the Benefits which he has purchased for his People; and that to Believers rightly partaking of them, they become a Sign and Seal, that Christ and these Benefits are made over to them. But I am far from imagining, that there is any Virtue in such Institutions as these, mechanically to produce any saving Effects, or to secure the divine Favour to those whose Hearts are estranged

\* Rom. i. 16.

from his Fear, and their Lives from his Service.

XXVII. I believe Baptism is to be administered to the Infants of believing Parents, as well as to adult Believers that have not been baptized before. For tho' these Infants are not able to exercise actual Faith and Holiness, and voluntarily to take upon them those Engagements which Baptism layeth them under; yet as some Children at least are Partakers of the Covenant of Grace, as Baptism is now, as Circumcision was formerly, a Seal thereof, as the Spirit of God can and often doth implant in the Souls of Children the Principles of Faith and Holiness, and as its no Contradiction to Reason, nay nothing else than what we daily see in civil Affairs, for Children to come under an Obligation in their Infancy to be perform'd in their riper Years; I say, as we have all those Reasons for Infant-Baptism, I believe they should be baptized; or, in the Language of the Apostle, *that the Children of Believers are holy\**, i. e. federally so, and therefore to be admitted to this initiatory Ordinance.

XXVIII. I believe also that the Lord's Supper is appointed as a confirming, strengthening and comforting Ordinance to the faithful Communicant, being intended as a solemn

\* 1 Cor. vii. 14.

Commemoration of the Death of Christ, as Seal of the Benefits purchased thereby, and as a Token of our Relation to each other as Brethren in him. I believe that it is only to be administered to adult Believers, who should *examine* themselves, and so eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup\*. And where no credible Profession of real Christianity is made, I think it is the Duty of Christian Communities to concur with their Ministers in excluding such from the Holy Feast, which they can only expect to eat and drink *Judgment to themselves* †.

XXIX. I believe that *for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, and for the edifying of the Body of Christ* ‡, he hath, according to the various Indigencies of his Church, given *some* that were *Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers*. That as the extraordinary Offices of Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists are now ceased, the Church having a full Revelation of the Will of God concerning Mens Salvation, the only remaining *Stewards of the Mysteries of God* are Pastors and Teachers. And I further apprehend, that none can regularly enter on the ministerial Office, in the full Exercise of it, but such as being competently furnished with Gifts and Graces, are providentially called, and in a solemn Manner

\* 1 Cor. xi. 28.

† 1 Cor. xi. 29.

‡ Eph. iv. 12.

set a-part thereunto, by Prayer and Fasting and the Imposition of the Hands of a Presbyter, unless very extraordinary Circumstances render it impracticable.

XXX. I believe that as civil Government absolutely necessary to the security of Mankind; so it is the Will of God, the great Guardian of his Creatures, that Magistrates should be regarded as ordained by him for the Good of their People\*; and that as it is their Office to protect their Subjects in their lawful Rights, and to suppress Vice and Immorality, so while they continue to act for these Purposes to which they are appointed I believe they are to be obey'd, *not only for Wrath, but for Conscience sake* †.

XXXI. I believe that after Death the Souls of the Righteous shall immediately enter into Glory, into the Presence of God and Christ, and the Enjoyment of all the Happiness that separate State will admit. That they shall continue in this State, joyfully expecting their full Perfection, till the Resurrection of the Dead. And I also believe that the Wicked shall be made immediately miserable, and with the Fallen Angels shall be reserved in Chains of Darkness till the Judgment of the great Day: So that there can be no middle State of Purgatory between Heaven and Hell.

\* Rom. xiii. 1. † Ver. 5.



but all the Arguments advanced for it are frivolous and impertinent.

XXXII. I believe that at the Consummation of this World, there shall be a general Resurrection of the Dead; that they shall come forth with the same Bodies which they left at Death, tho' with very different Qualities; that they who are alive shall be changed *in the Twinkling of an Eye, at the last Trump\**. That the Righteous shall be raised with glorious refined Bodies, fitted in every respect for immortal and happy Spirits to dwell in. That the Wicked shall also be raised with such Bodies as shall be fit to endure those endless Torments into which they shall immediately pass after Judgment.

XXXIII. I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come to administer this great Solemnity in the Glory of his Father, and his own Glory, with a splendid Retinue of the heavenly Host, and will judge the Quick and the Dead, according to the Deeds done in the Body, whether they be good or bad†. That to the Righteous he will say, *Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom of God prepared for you from the Foundation of the World‡: And to the Wicked, Depart from me, ye Curst, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels§.*

\* 1. Cor. xv. 51, 52. † 2. Thess. i. 7. ‡ Mat. xxv. 34. Ver. 45.

XXXIV. *Lastly, I believe, that in consequence of these Sentences, the Wicked shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and the Glory of his Power* \* ; *for they shall go away into everlasting Punishment; and that the Righteous shall enter into eternal Life, and so be for ever with the Lord* † ; introduced in their complete Persons to complete Felicity, in the immediate Presence of God, where there is Fulness of Joy, and at his Right-hand, where there are Pleasures for ever more. Into which blessed State may we all have a rich and an abundant Entrance administred, thro' the Merits of our dear Redeemer; To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed endless Glory, Dominion, and Praise for ever and ever. Amen.

\* 2 Thess. i. 9. † Mat. xxv. 46.





THE  
C H A R G E

Given to the  
Reverend Mr. *William Johnston,*

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By T. STEWARD.

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T having been desir'd that the part of the solemn Work and Service of this Day, which is commonly called, *Giving the Charge*, should be perform'd by me, I shall under a deep Sense of my own Weakness and Incompetency, address myself in a few Words to you, my *Reverend Brother*, who have been now solemnly devoted to the Service of God in the Work of the *Ministry*, and set apart thereunto by *Fasting and Prayer*, with *Imposition of Hands*; and shall endeavour with all brotherly Freedom and Faithfulness to suggest some-

somewhat to you by way of *Advice*, and somewhat also by way of *Incouragement*. And,

I. LET me suggest something to you by way of *Counsel*, upon your Entrance on the Exercise of the sacred ministerial Office in all the *Parts* and *Branches* thereof, after having satisfactorily performed for some Time *one* of its *Parts*, I mean, the publick preaching of the Word. And I know not how to lay better Foundation whereon to build what I have to propose to your serious Consideration, under this Head of Advice, than those very comprehensive Words of the *Apostle*, which were a part of what I may call his *dying Charge* to his Son *Timothy*, *Make full Proof of thy Ministry*\*; or those other Words to the same Effect, which he would have said to *Archippus*, *Take heed to the Ministry which thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it*†.

THE ministerial Work in its full Extent and Latitude (unto the Discharge whereof you, *my dear Brother*, have now given up yourself in a very solemn Manner) is a Work of great Weight and Importance. 'Tis indeed a *good Work*, an honourable Office; but 'tis also a *great Work*, there is *Onus* as well as *Honos* belonging to it; and I doubt, not but you have a deep Sense and Apprehension hereof, and have accordingly set about it, not in your own Strength, but in an humble Reliance and

\* 2 Tim. iv. 5.

† Col. iv. 17.



Dependance upon the Grace and Assistance of the great *Shepherd*, the *Prince of Pastors*, the glorious *King* and *Head* of the *Church*, our blessed Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, who has sent you into his *Vineyard*, and set you at work as a *Labourer* therein, without whose Help the best of *Ministers* are nothing, and can do nothing; but *nil desperandum Christo duce, et auspice Christo*. I can do all things, says the *Apostle*, thro' *Christ* strengthening me \*, tho' none ever express'd a greater Sense of their own Insufficiency in themselves consider'd, than this *humble Apostle*. In imitation of his excellent Example, and under the encouraging Expectation of that gracious Assistance from our *Master Jesus*, which all his faithful Servants may warrantably hope for, do you, my *Brother*, apply yourself to the Discharge of that holy Office into which he has been pleased to put you, endeavouring to be faithful to him who has sent you, and to those precious Souls to whom you are sent, and which are committed (and have by the Direction of his Providence committed themselves) to your pastoral Care and Conduct.

THOUGH by the Blessing of God upon your preparatory Studies you have attained a considerable Measure of divine Knowledge, as well as human Learning, and have now witnessed a good Confession; yet you are not to

\* Phil. iv. 13.

rest in any present Attainments either in Knowledge or Grace, but to be still *pressing forwards*, and labouring after more; in order whereunto you must be much in *Prayer and Meditation*, and give *Attendance to reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine*, not in any wise *neglecting the Gift that is in you*, but exciting and improving it, *that your profiting may appear to all*, as the *Apostle* speaks to *Timothy* \*.

A CONTINUED Progress in the Study of the *holy Scriptures*, as the only unerring, infallible *Rule of Faith and Practice* will be your necessary Duty, and highly requisite to render you a *Scribe well instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven*, as our blessed Lord expresses it †; that you may be an *able Minister of the New Testament*, and capable to *bring forth out of the good Treasure you have laid up, things new*, as well as *old*, suited to the various Cases and Exigencies of those who do and shall attend upon your sacred Ministrations. And it should be your constant Care and Endeavour, to keep up that Savour and Relish of divine things, and those lively and strong Impressions of the great and momentous Concernments of another World, in and upon your own Soul, which it is your Duty to do what in you lies to affect the Hearts of your People with; for tho' the Validity of

\* 1 Tim. iv. 13, 14, 15.

† Mat. xiii. 52.

ministerial Acts does not depend upon the personal Holiness of Ministers, but upon the Authority of their great Lord and Master, whose Commission they bear; yet 'tis true, as well as an old Observation, That what comes from the Heart of the Speaker, is most likely to reach to the Hearts of the Hearers: It seemeth mete to the all-wise God to adapt suitable Means for the Attainment of proper and desirable Ends.

LABOUR then, *dear Brother*, to *feel* what you *say*, if you would have those to whom you preach *feel* what they *hear*: And as ever you desire instrumentally to *save yourself*, and the immortal Souls to whom you minister in holy things, O beg with great earnestness for large communications of divine *Light*, and *Life*, and *Love* from the great Fountain thereof, and for large Measures of Grace and Holiness; and the greater Experience you have of the Workings of the *Spirit* upon your own Soul, enabling you to subdue your remaining Corruptions, to overcome Temptations, to live above this World while you live in it, and to be found in the faithful Discharge of all personal and relative Duties, the fitter you will be to teach others: You will *pray* the better, and *preach* the better, and *live* the better, and have more Ground to hope for an abundant Blessing from Heaven upon your ministerial Labours, and that the Word of the Lord shall prosper in your

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Mouth, and his Work prosper in your Hands: Or whatever your Success may be yet you will have this to comfort yourself with, that *your Work is with the Lord and your Reward is with your God*, who will deal with his poor Ministers, not according to their Success, but according to their Sincerity. *Your rejoicing will be this even the Testimony of your Conscience, that in Simplicity, and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, you have had your Conversation in the World, and especially towards your Flock and Charge\**, as the Apostle says with reference to his own and his Fellow-labourer's Case.

THE way to make full Proof of your Ministry, or to take due heed to the Ministry which you have received of the Lord, and to the Flock of Christ, which he hath made you an Overseer of, is to take heed to yourself in the first Place. O take heed to the Frame and Temper of your own Heart, that it be serious and devout, holy and humble, meek and patient, charitable and compassionate, full of Love to Christ, and his Lambs and Sheep; that you may feed them and rule them under the Influence of this noble, the divine and heavenly Principle; that you may pray with and for them with great Fervour of Affection, and long after their Growth and Edification, their Establishment and Con-

\* 2 Cor. i. 12.

† Acts xx. 28. 1 Tim. iv. 16.  
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firmation, and be the happy *Helper* of their Joy and Consolation. And *take heed* also to the Course and Tenour of your own Life, that it be very exemplary to your Flock, according to the Apostolical Direction, *Be thou an Example to the Believers, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Faith, in Purity* \*. Preach by your *Life*, as well as by your *Lips*, that those who hear you speak, may see by your own good Works, that you do indeed believe yourself what you deliver to them.

IN a Word, let your holy Conversation be a visible Exemplification of your holy Instructions and Exhortations to your People, and tend to convince all who observe your way and walking, that there is a Reality in Religion, and that serious Godliness is more than a Fancy.

AND then, as to your publick Ministrations in the Church of God, let me speak to you in the very awful Words of the *Apostle* to *Timothy*, in the last Chapter of his Second Epistle, at the Beginning; *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead, at his Appearing and his Kingdom; preach the Word, be instant in Season, out of Season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all Long-suffering and Doctrine.* Nothing can be more awful than

\* 1 Tim. iv. 12.

the Charge, nothing more weighty than the enforcement of it, *q. d.* I do most solemnly adjure thee by *God the Father*, and the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who shall be Judge of the whole World, at the great and solemn Day of his Appearance, and will give to all according to their Works, as thou hast any regard to *God the Father*, or to *Christ his incarnate Son*, I charge thee, that thou take all Opportunities of urging and pressing the great Truths and Duties of Christianity, upon all that thou hast any Access to, or Influence upon; endeavouring to rectify their Errors and Mistakes, to reform and amend whatever is amiss in them, and by an unwearied Constancy, and unfainting Perseverance in teaching, instructing, admonishing and exhorting them, to bring them to the Profession and Practice of true Religion. *Timothy* was, doubtless, a very laborious Preacher; we may find by the Character the *Apostle* elsewhere gives of him, that he was, as I may say, a *None such*, there were few *like-minded* with him, few animated with his Zeal and Fervour; and yet the *Apostle* thought fit to leave this most awakening, quickening Word with him, as a Spur to him, to double, if it were possible his Diligence in the ministerial Work, to be instant *cinalews, analas*, publicly and privately on Lord's-Days, and Week-Days when Opportunity offers, in times of Danger and Persecution, as well as in times of Peace and Liberty.

erty, when there is but little, as well as when there is the greatest likelihood of doing good upon them.

A Minister must not faint or be discourag'd, he must not intermit, much less leave off his Work upon any Pretence whatsoever ; but he should be armed and fortified against difficulties and Discouragements, being *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, instructing and exhorting with Meekness and Patience those that oppose him and themselves, pitying them that appear to have but little pity for their own souls, praying for them that will scarce pray for themselves, and encouraging them that have begun to go on well, *strengthening the weak hands, and the feeble knees*, resolving the doubting, confirming the Wavering, comforting the Disconsolate, visiting and praying with the Sick, assisting dying Persons in the solemn Moments of their approaching Dissolution, &c. and a Minister must do all this with regard to the Commission and Instructions he has received from his great Lord and Master Jesus, and to the strict account he must give to him at the great Day.

THUS, dear Brother, should you acquit yourself in the Station wherein you are now placed, thus should you *make full proof of your Ministry*. It should be the great Aim and End, the main Scope and Design of your Preaching to render your Hearers wiser and

and better, to enlighten their Judgments with the Knowledge of *the Truth as it is in Jesus*; to *preach, not yourself, but Christ Jesus the Lord*, (as you have been excellently well instructed and exhorted by my Reverend Brother in his most suitable Sermon, to direct their Consciences in all doubtful and difficult Cases, to warm and invigorate their pious and gracious Affections, to confirm all their good Purposes and Resolutions, and to excite them to the Practice of *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, and praise-worthy, and of good Report*, to speak in the Language of the *Apostle* \*.

LET me add, that with respect to those publick Prayers and Praises which you are to offer up as the Mouth of your People unto God, you should labour to suit them as much as possible to their State and Circumstances. And when you administer *the holy Sacraments of Baptism* and the *Lord's-Supper*, the instituted Signs and Seals of the New Covenant, you must endeavour, in the Strength of *Christ*, to perform these Parts of your Office, with that Gravity and Seriousness, and those Enlargements of devout Affections, which become the peculiar Solemnity of such federal Transactions with the great and glorious *Jehovah*, thro' a *Mediator*.

\* Phil. iv. 8.



To conclude this Head, The Exercise of *sacred Discipline*, when you may be called to it by various Emergencies, will require a great deal of Prudence and Discretion, Meekness and Patience, as well as Courage and Impartiality, that the true and proper Ends thereof may be happily and successfully answered and attained, so far as the present State of human Infirmary and Imperfection will admit.

THUS, *dear Brother*, I have delivered what I judged necessary, or at least expedient to recommend to you by way of *Advice* and *Direction*. Let me next say a little,

SECONDLY, By way of *Encouragement* unto the chearful Discharge of the several Duties which have been laid before you. Your Work is indeed very great and difficult, painful and laborious, but it is truly honourable and excellent, an Office and Service that you can have no Reason to be ashamed of. 'Tis a Matter of great Dignity to be an *Ambassador* for *Christ*, a *Messenger* from the Lord of Hosts to the Sons and Daughters of Men, a *Steward* and *Dispenser* of the *Mysteries* and *manifested Grace of God*; to speak in the Name of God, and by his Authority, to publish and proclaim his Will, as declared in his Word, &c.

How much soever Ministers may be slighted and despised, by a blind, perverted, distracted Generation of Infidels, their Function

tion is truly divine, and their Character challenges respect. To be an Instrument in the Hand of God, to spread the Light of spiritual saving Knowledge, and to promote and advance the Interests of practical Godliness in a dark and degenerate World, to be happy Instruments, I say, in the Hand of Christ for bringing Souls to him, and building them up in him, and making daily additions to the measure of their Graces, *viz* of their *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Hope*, their *Humility* and *Heavenly-mindedness*, to render them growing, thriving, flourishing Christians, till they be fit to be transplanted from the Garden of God here below, into the celestial *Paradise* above, this sure is the most noble, the most beneficial Work that any Mortal is capable to perform; and therefore the Ministers of the Gospel may, and ought with the great *Apostle*, humbly to magnify *their Office*; and whoever shall dare to vilify it, do contract the Guilt of horrible Indignity against Christ himself, who has clothed his Ministers with Honour, and assured them for their Comfort and Encouragement, that *he who receives them, receives him*, and such as *despise them, despise him*, and Wo will be to such Despisers at the Day of his illustrious Appearance.

How mean soever the Persons of Ministers may be, and how many soever lamentable Failings, Infirmities and Imperfections the

may be attended with (as being *Men of like Passions with others*, and not exempted from the common Lot) yet their Office is sacred, their Work is very honourable, and great Respect, and Esteem, and Love are due to them upon that Account\*.

To what has been said, let me add one thing more, which should afford great Solace and abundant Consolation to all the faithful Ministers of Christ, and I hope, *dear Brother*, that you have, and will have good Ground to apply it to yourself, I mean the charming Prospect of a bright and glorious *Crown*, which the great *Shepherd* of the *Sheep* hath promised to bestow upon all his watchful, painful *Under-shepherds* as a Reward not indeed of *Debt*, but of *Grace*. This *St. Peter* proposes to those *Elders* whom he exhorts to *feed the Flock of God, taking the Over-sight thereof; not by Constraint, but willingly; not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind; neither as being Lords over God's Heritage, but Ensamples to the Flock*. I say, this great *Reward* the Apostle sets before them, to animate and encourage them to the diligent Discharge of every Part of their hard and difficult *Work*†: Then, says he, *the chief Shepherd shall appear, and shall receive a Crown of Glory, that fadeth not away*. And what this is, who can tell? 'Tis, doubtless, something too great for our Thoughts, and much more too big for our Words. Apprehension is indeed dazzled, Imagination astonished, and all Expression swallowed up here. A †

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THE Jewels that adorn this heavenly Crown, are too radiant and sparkling for our weak Eyes to behold. The felicity of all sincere Christians, and particularly of all faithful Ministers of Christ, in the coming World, is such, that it will be far from being known till it be fully enjoyed. O happy and glorious, most bright and blessed Day, when Ministers and People shall meet together in the Temple of God above, with mutual unutterable Exultations and Transports of overflowing, and yet everflowing Joy! And when those that are wise, shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament; and those that have turned many to Righteousness as the Stars for ever and ever \*! A Scripture that should put Life and Spirit in abundance into all the Servants of Christ, and especially into those whose Work and Business it is to minister in this excellent Service of converting Souls, turning them from Darkness to Light, from Sin to Holiness, and from the Power of Satan unto God, that they may receive Forgiveness of Sins, and an Inheritance among them which are sanctified through Faith in Christ Jesus †.

WELL may the lively Hope of so transcendent a Reward, such an exceeding eternal Weight of Glory, support and comfort poor Ministers amidst all their painful Labour yea, under the sharpest Trials and Sufferings which they may be exposed unto, and cause them to break out into those pathetic Expre



sions of *St. Paul*, when he was going bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, looking for Bonds and Afflictions, which did almost every where attend him. But (says he, with a noble Air of holy Resolution, and in the triumphant Exercise of a strong and inflamed Love to his Master *Jesus*) none of these things move me; neither count I my Life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my Course with joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord *Jesus*, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God\*.

AND thus, dear Brother, I leave you under the encouraging Views and Hopes of present Assistance from your great Lord and Master in his Work, and a future *Recompence of Reward*, above the Power of Oratory to describe; and shall now beg leave to conclude, with applying myself in a few Words to you, my Beloved, of this Christian Society, who have made Choice of this my Reverend Brother as your Pastor, and what I would humbly recommend to you, and earnestly press upon you is, That you would be much in Prayer to God for this Servant of his, to whom you have committed the Care of your precious Souls, and that you would esteem him highly in Love, for his Work sake, and be at peace among yourselves.

O BE much at the Throne of Grace, and wrestle hard in Prayer for your Minister, that a Door of Utterance may be given unto him, and that a Door of Entrance may be

given unto the Words which he shall speak from the Lord, into your Hearts. Doubtless, you desire and expect that he should pray frequently and fervently for you, and it is indeed his Duty, and I hope will be his Practice so to do; but then it is no less your Duty to pray much and heartily for him, that his *Hands* may be strengthened and his *Heart* encouraged in doing the Work of the Lord among you, and for your Benefit and Advantage,

THE best of Ministers need the Prayers and desire the Prayers of their People, and of all good Christians. You may see with what an holy Vehemence and pious Warmth the *Apostle* expresses himself to the *Romans* *I beseech you, Brethren, (says he) for the Love of Jesus Christ's sake, and for the Love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your Prayers to God for me\**. And to the *Colossians* he says, continue in Prayer, and watch in the same with Thanksgiving, withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a Door of Utterance to speak the mystery of Christ, that I may make it manifest as ought to speak†. And to the same Purpose he bespeaks the *Thessalonians*: Finally, Brethren pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free Course, and be glorified‡.

IT were easy to shew you at large, had I time for it, that Christian People are bound to pray for the Ministers of the Gospel for

\* Rom. xv. 30. † Col. iv. 3, 4 ‡ 2 Thes. iii. 1.

*Christ's sake*, from whom they receive their Commission and Instructions, upon whose Errand they are sent, in whose Name they act, and for whom they negotiate with the Souls of Men upon and about the most important Affairs of his Glory, and their Salvation, and to whom they must give an Account of their Embassy. And that they should be much in Prayer for Ministers, because (as I have already intimated) *Ministers stand in need of all the Help that their People can possibly afford them in this way.* The Charge and Burden that lies upon them being very great and heavy, their Work being most painful and laborious, and a vast deal of ministerial Prudence, and Zeal, and Patience, and Self-denial, and Courage, and Constancy, being requisite to the due Discharge thereof; especially, considering the violent Opposition they do and must expect to meet with in the Exercise of their Office, *partly* from the remaining Corruptions of their own Hearts, which are many, and would prove much too strong for them, if they were to go out against them in their own unassisted Strength; *partly* from the Subtlety and Malice of their *Adversary* the Devil, who owes them the greatest Spight, as being the most avowed Enemies of his dark Kingdom; and *partly*, from the Stubbornness and Obstinacy of carnal unconverted Sinners; yea, and from the unhappy Mistakes and Misapprehensions of some well-meaning Christians themselves, and the fatal Divisions

sions that in consequence hereof do too often fall out among the Professors of Religion, which do many times greatly weaken the Hands and discourage the Heart of Ministers, and prove a sad Obstruction to them in the Prosecution of their Master's Work.

AND, lastly, I might shew you, That People are bound to pray for Ministers, not only *for Christ's sake, and for the sake of their Ministers*, but also *for their own sakes*. When you pray for *us*, you in effect pray for yourselves, for your own spiritual Profit and Edification, which it is the Work and Business of Ministers to promote unto the utmost of their Power.

BUT I must leave these things to be further enlarged upon in your own private Meditations, lest I should exceed all bounds in this Exercise. And, I hope, *my Beloved*, that you are already so well convinced and persuaded of your Duty in this Particular, that your Minister shall never want the Benefit of your most ardent Supplications on his behalf.

AND as you are thus to pray for him upon all the now-mentioned Accounts, so it will be your Duty to *bearken to his ministerial Instructions, Admonitions, and Exhortations*, and to yield a ready Obedience thereunto so far as they shall appear to you to be agreeable to the Mind and Will of his and your Lord and Master Jesus. And you should your utmost assist him in all his Administrations in your several Places. It should



your Endeavour to make his hard Work as easy as possible, *that he may be with you without discouraging dispiriting Fear, or anxious and solicitous Care, with reference to any of the Affairs of a present Life.*

In a word I would earnestly recommend to you the maintaining and cultivating mutual Love. *Be at peace among yourselves, which is the concluding Part of the Apostle's affectionate Advice and Exhortation to the Believers at Thessalonica\*.*

ENDEAVOUR to free your Minds, as much as may be, from Prejudice and Passion, and put the best and most charitable Construction upon each others Words and Actions, and make the most candid Interpretation of them that the Matter will any way bear, and be ready to make all favourable mutual Allowances for human Infirmities, and carefully observe that excellent Direction of the *Apostle to the Philippians, Whereto ye have already attained, walk by the same Rule; mind the same things, even the things that make for Peace, and things wherewith ye may edify another†.* And as the same *Apostle* says to the *Corinthians, Let all your things be done with Charity‡: Charity not only towards yourselves, but also towards such of your Christian Friends and Brethren, Neighbours and Acquaintance, who in some particular Instances, and in some lesser Matters, may differ from you. Think much and often*

\* 1 Thes. v. 13.

† Phil. iii. 16. Rom. xiv. 19.

‡ 1 Cor. xvi. 14.

of that amiable Description which the  
 gives of this excellent Grace, in these  
 emphatical Words, which deserve a thousand  
 Thoughts: *Charity suffereth long, is  
 kind; Charity envieth not, Charity vaunteth  
 not itself, is not puffed up: Doth not  
 itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is  
 easily provoked, thinketh no Evil: Rejoiceth  
 not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth.  
 Beareth all things, believeth all things,  
 endureth all things.\** A Sermon  
 which would afford matter for a large and  
 full Comment. But I hope, my Beloved,  
 will make Conscience of commenting upon  
 in and by your Practice, which will be the  
 best Exemplification and Illustration of it.

I SHALL conclude all with the same  
 excellent Words, towards the Close of his  
 second Epistle to the Corinthians; *Farewell  
 Brethren, farewell, be perfect, be of good  
 comfort, be of one Mind, live in Peace, and  
 the God of Love and Peace shall be with  
 you. And with the affectionate Leave which  
 I take of the Elders of the Church of Ephe-  
 sus; And now, Brethren, I commend you  
 to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which  
 is able to build you up, and to give you an  
 inheritance among all them which are sanctified  
 here †, and shall be eternally saved hereafter.  
 Amen and Amen.*

\* 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. † Acts xi. 18.

F. I. N. I. S.